GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:848
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PROMOTION OF SCIENCE EDUCATION AND RESEARCH
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Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the precautions taken by the Government to control the encroachment of IT boom in the areas of basic research by attracting the cream of the students from prestigious institutions;

(b) whether the basic scientific research programme launched by UGC is sufficient to boost the scientific research in the country;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) the steps taken by the Government to attract youngsters in the field of basic science; and

(e) the details of programmes to promote science education in school level to check the decrease in the number of students opting for basic science after Higher Secondary level?

Answer

MINISTER OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND MINISTER OF EARTH SCIENCES (KAPIL SIBAL)

(a) to (e): The Government of India, on its part, has taken a number of steps to rejuvenate and promote scientific research in universities and other scientific institutes of excellence. The Plan Allocation of scientific departments has been doubled from about Rs. 12000 crore in the IX Plan to about Rs. 25000 crores in the X Plan and it is planned to increased substantially in the XI Plan. The Research Infrastructure programme of DST is a targeted programme to upgrade the laboratory infrastructure in universities and other higher educational institutions. Several institutions, centres of excellence and facilities in emerging and frontline areas have also been established; for example, in the areas of Brain Research, Marine Biotechnology, Stem Cell and Tissue Engineering, Soft Computing, Water Resources development, Nanophosphors, Display Technology; Fuel Cell Technology, Ultrafast Processes, Protein Research, etc. More recently; three new Indian Institutes of Science Education and Research (IISERs) have been set up at Kolkata, Pune and Chandigarh which, apart from carrying out frontline and internationally competitive research, would offer M.Sc. programmes in a multi-disciplinary and academically flexible and research-oriented environment. It is also planned to establish autonomous research institutes in the areas of molecular materials, glaciology, cancer research, nano-technology etc.

Developing and nurturing of human resource in Science & Technology has always been on top of the Government's agenda. A number of schemes have been initiated to attract research scholars namely Young Scientists/ Women Scientists Fellowships; Swarnajayanthi Fellowships, Shyama Prasad Mookerjee Fellowships, KS Krishnan Fellowships and J.C. Bose & Ramanujam Fellowships for practicing scientists, Junior/Senior Research Fellowships (JRF/SRF), Research Associateship etc. More recently the fellowships of JRF/SRF have been enhanced. The Government, in the XI Plan is also proposing to launch a new scheme called INSPIRE (Innovation in Science Pursuit for Inspired Research). The main features of the proposed scheme will be:
(1) innovation funding in schools (one million young innovators);
(2) summer camp with science icons (for high performers);
(3) assured opportunity schemes for proven talent force; and,
(4) retention of talents in public funded research.

In addition, another new scheme on Scholarships for Science in Higher Education will be initiated in the XI Plan. The scheme targets institution of 10,000 fellowships of Rs. 1,00,000/- per year for bright students in science streams during their B.Sc/M.Sc courses.